

Railfax



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VIA Rail Negotiations

The second stage of contract talks between the CAW and VIA Rail Canada continued from November 18 to 20 in Montreal on CAW Collective Agreements 1, 2 and 3, which all expire at 23:59 December 31, 2009.

Local 100 President John Burns reports that the parties dealt specifically with Work Rules demands and to date the parties have not discussed monetary demands, although Via Rail did present the Union with an overview of its economic situation which reflected lower ridership and reduced income. They have made headway in addressing some Work Rule changes; however, any changes are contingent on acceptance of an overall Agreement. The Bargaining Team is committed to try and achieve an acceptable collective Agreement for its members as quickly as possible;

Heather Grant, Secretary-Treasurer for Council 4000, says that bargaining on work rules for Agreements 1 and 2 has not been as productive as the Council 4000 Bargaining Committee would have liked it. "We are having difficulties in gaining any momentum to push towards achieving a settlement before years end, or early into the New Year," explained Grant.

The parties have scheduled the full week of December 14 to 18 in Montreal to continue negotiations. We ask for the continued support and solidarity of our membership as we work in achieving a fair and equitable settlement on the behalf of our 2,000-plus members at VIA. To date the CAW has not applied for conciliation. We will be reviewing the status of bargaining at the end of the bargaining session in December. We will continue to keep our members updated throughout this process.

TTR Vote

In a 70% margin, workers at Toronto Terminals Railway (TTR) in Toronto voted to remain members of Canada's largest private sector union, the CAW. The vote conducted by the Canada Industrial Relations Board following a displacement application pursuant to Section 32(1) of the Canada Labour Code.

The TTR workforce has been members of the CAW and National Council 4000/Local 4003 for many years. The relationship dates back to the days of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers Union (CBRT&GW) and the beginning of TTR in July 1906. They became CAW members in 1994 when the CBRT&GW merged with the CAW.

TTR was incorporated by the Government of Canada on July 13, 1906 to "*construct, provide, maintain and operate at the City of Toronto a union passenger station*". Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railways (initially Grand Trunk Railway) were 50% owners of TTR and Union Station in downtown Toronto.

The CAW immediately mounted an organizing drive to persuade TTR members to remain CAW. Various information meetings were held along with worksite visits from Council 4000 Regional Representatives John Almdal and Danny Andru, Local 4003 VP Roy Eagan, Staff Representative Caroline Lavoie of the CAW Organizing Department, Council 4000 President Barry Kennedy and CAW Director of Organizing John Aman.

CAW President Ken Lewenza sent a letter to members highlighting our past achievements and informing them of the fact that many of the benefits, pension and work rule improvements made on the behalf of our TTR membership were achieved from the patterns negotiated by the CAW with CN and CP.

Council 4000 President Barry Kennedy thanked everyone for their hard work and successful efforts, saying: "We remain committed and look forward to our continued relationship with our TTR membership."

We are pleased with the decision of our membership and their confidence to remain with the CAW. They have given us a clear mandate with which to begin negotiations on a new agreement with TTR, which begins on December 2nd in Toronto.

Savage Alberta Railway - Bargaining

The CAW is preparing demands for negotiations with CN on a new collective agreement for Council 4000/Local 4001 members at Savage Alberta Railway (SAR) who work as Conductors and Locomotive Engineers based in Grande Cache and Grande Prairie, Alberta. The current agreement expires at 23:59 December 31, 2009.

CN purchased this short line, which was a former CN branch line, from Savage Companies of Salt Lake City, Utah on December 1, 2006. This will be the first round of collective bargaining with CN on behalf of our SAR membership.

The Union is looking to improve wages to bring our membership in line with running trades hourly rates at Mackenzie Northern Railway (MKNR) – another Northern Alberta short line recently purchased by CN – along with improvements to the existing benefit plans. The Union is also looking at maintaining the scheduled hours and assignments for members, and maintaining various provisions currently in place within the collective agreement.

Local Chair Dave Judge, Regional Representative Ron Shore and Council 4000 President Barry Kennedy make up the bargaining committee, with the assistance of Bob Fitzgerald.